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Topology and its Applications 154 (2007) 970–971

**Topology
and its
Applications**

www.elsevier.com/locate/topol

Editorial

Professor Janusz Jerzy Charatonik [May 24, 1934 – July 11, 2004] [☆]

Professor Janusz Jerzy Charatonik was born on May 24, 1934, in Przemyśl, a small town in the southeastern part of Poland.

After the Second World War his family moved to Lower Silesia, in the southwestern part of Poland. He finished high school in Wrocław in 1951. In the same year he started to study mathematics at the University of Wrocław. Some of his university professors were Stanisław Hartman (Calculus and Algebra), Bronisław Knaster (Higher Geometry, Topology, Dimension Theory), Edward Marczewski (Set Theory, Real Valued Functions), Jan Nikliborc (Experimental Physics), Czesław Ryll-Nardzewski (Calculus, Analytic Geometry), and Witold Wolibner (Theoretical Mechanics). Two of his classmates were: Andrzej Lelek, a retired professor from the University of Houston, and Jan Mycielski, a professor in Denver, Colorado. He finished his studies to obtain his Master's Degree in 1955 and obtained his Master of Science in Mathematics on June 27 of 1955 from the University of Wrocław. To this end, he wrote a thesis whose title is: *On estimations of the moduli of some coefficients of power series of medium-univalent analytic functions with a pole*, under the supervision of Professor Witold Wolibner. After one year teaching in a high school in Opole, he returned to Wrocław where he had obtained a position as a lecturer at the university.

At that time he changed his interest from complex analysis to topology. He started to attend the *Higher Seminar on Topology* conducted by Professor Bronisław Knaster for the Wrocław Branch of the Mathematical Institute of the Polish Academy of Science. Participants of the seminar meetings were then (1956) Roman Duda, Andrzej Lelek, Zbigniew Łuszczki, Jerzy Mioduszewski, Witold Nitka, Edward Piegat, Marian Reichaw and a few others. The meetings took place at Professor Knaster's home, in a rather small room with a row of about ten chairs and a small blackboard.

As a participant of this seminar, he had the opportunity to meet several of the well-known topologists of that time who visited Professor Knaster in Wrocław. They were, among others, P.S. Aleksandroff and Yu.M. Smirnov from Moscow, K. Borsuk, R. Engelking, J. Kransinkiewicz and K. Sieklucki from Warsaw, R.D. Anderson, D.P. Bellamy, R.H. Bing, C.L. Hagopian, E.E. Moise from the United States.

On February 2, 1956, Professor Charatonik married Marianna Kalota. They had five children, Włodzimierz Jan, Janusz Aleksander, Witold Przemysław, Aleksandra Beata, and Tomasz Jarosław. All of them have obtained a Master of Science degrees in Mathematics or Computer Science. Włodzimierz and Witold have a PhD degree.

Professor Charatonik earned his PhD on April 28 of 1965 from the University of Wrocław, under Professor Bronisław Knaster, based on three published papers related to the structure and mapping properties of dendroids (thus no separate PhD thesis was written).

In the academic year 1967–1968 he spent one year in the United States, at the University of Kentucky (Lexington, KY), where further research was done. He obtained results concerning the structure of acyclic curves and presented them as a habilitation thesis, and he got the degree of Habil. Ph.D. in 1970. One year earlier, after Professor Knaster's retirement in 1969, he was nominated as the chairman of *Chair of Geometry and Topology* of the University of

[☆] This note is based on Professor Charatonik's unpublished paper *A few pages about myself*, written on April 12, 1999, and his curriculum vitae.

Wrocław, keeping this position until 1996. He obtained the title of an *Extraordinary Professor* in 1978. In 1988 he obtained the title of *Ordinary Professor*.

During his career, Professor Charatonik had eleven PhD students:

- (1) Bassam En-Nashif 1973,
- (2) Tadeusz Maćkowiak 1974,
- (3) Zbigniew M. Rakowski 1976,
- (4) Zbigniew Piotrowski 1979,
- (5) Paweł Krupski 1985,
- (6) Jacek Nikiel 1985,
- (7) Stanisław T. Czuba 1985,
- (8) Stanisław Miklos 1986,
- (9) Krzysztof Omiljanowski 1988,
- (10) Janusz R. Prajs 1990,
- (11) Verónica Martínez de la Vega y Mansilla 2002

and more than two hundred Master's students.

Professor Charatonik received many awards, the main ones being the following:

- (1) *Gold Cross of Merit*, given to him in September of 1972.
- (2) *Knight Cross of the Order "Polonia Restituta"*, given to him in September of 1979.
- (3) *Medal of the Commission of the National Education*, given to him in October of 1980.
- (4) *Medal of the 40th Anniversary of the People's Republic of Poland*, given to him in June of 1984.
- (5) *Special award given by the President of the University of Wrocław*, 2001.

Professor Charatonik wrote nearly 300 research papers, he gave many invited talks and he was a visiting professor in several universities.

In 1994, Professor Charatonik and his son Włodzimierz were invited to go to Mexico City for a month to give a series of lectures on continuum theory. During that visit Alejandro Illanes and Sergio Macías asked him if he would like to come to Mexico for a longer visit; after thinking for 30 seconds he responded *yes*. And so, the Institute of Mathematics of the National University of Mexico had the privilege of his presence since October of 1995.

In July of 1999, the *Continuum Theory Session* of the *First International Meeting Japan–Mexico of Topology and its Applications* was dedicated to Professor Charatonik in recognition of all his work on this area.

Just five years later Janusz Charatonik died, on July 11, 2004. Today we dedicate the proceedings of this conference to his memory, the memory of a kind and joyous friend and mentor, whose life was devoted to topology and topologists.

S. Macias

E-mail address: sergiom@matem.unam.mx